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PRESS RELEASE

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Man Convicted of Killing Northwest Washington Couple - He and Two Others Targeted Home For Burglary -

WASHINGTON - Jose Portillo, 22, was convicted by a jury today of first degree felony murder and other charges in the November 2008 slayings of Virginia and Michael Spevak, who were attacked while in their Northwest Washington home, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Cathy L. Lanier, Chief of the Metropolitan Police Department announced.

Portillo is the third and final defendant to be convicted in the case. Two others earlier pleaded guilty to charges and are awaiting sentencing. The verdict was returned late this afternoon in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia.

The jury convicted Portillo of a total of 15 charges, including first degree felony murder with aggravating circumstances, second degree murder while armed, armed robbery of a senior citizen, burglary, theft and weapons offenses. The defendant faces a maximum penalty of life in prison with no possibility of release. The Honorable Judge Michael L. Rankin, who presided at trial, set a sentencing date for Portillo of March 10, 2011.

According to evidence presented at trial, on November 20, 2008, Portillo, along with the two former co-defendants, entered the Spevaks' home in the 5300 block of Belt Road NW. Their intention was to burglarize the home. Portillo went into the Spevak's house armed with a gun. He confronted Mrs. Spevak, 67, with the gun - pointing it to her face. He also tied her up with a telephone cord prior to her being murdered. Mr. Spevak, 68, also was slain by the intruders. Both of the victims died from stab wounds. Portillo removed a laptop and other property from the home after the murders were committed. He was arrested in March of 2009.

The other defendants, Peiro F. Hernandez, 23, and Angela Hernandez-Rivera, 22, were arrested within a week of the murders. Hernandez pleaded guilty in January of 2009 to second degree murder while armed. Hernandez-Rivera pleaded guilty in August of 2009 to second degree murder while armed and burglary. Peiro Hernandez testified for the prosecution during Portillo's trial.

"The entire community was outraged by the senseless murders of this loving and generous couple," said U.S. Attorney Machen. "We can only hope that the convictions of the three people responsible for this tragedy bring some measure of comfort to the many people who benefitted from the Spevaks' good works."

"This was not a random crime," said Chief Lanier. "These criminals targeted a couple that was known for their generosity, warmth, and kindness. There is no greater satisfaction than an outcome like this verdict today."

In announcing the guilty verdicts, U.S. Attorney Machen and Chief Lanier commended the efforts of those who worked on the case, including MPD Detectives Anthony Greene, the lead investigator, and his partner James Wilson. They also praised the efforts of Detectives Gus Giannakoulis, Joshua Branson, and Norma Horne; Lieutenants Ozetta Posey and James Cullen; Sgt. Louie White; Officers Bruce Cooper, Alton Ellis, Kevin Kennedy, Clifton Murphy and Lori Oxenreider; Technicians James Holder, John Holder, Jay Gregory, George Klein, Charles Egan and Brenda Floyd; Fingerprint Specialist Diane Glover, and DNA Examiner Jennifer Zeffer. They also acknowledged the work of Dr. Wayne Williams of the D.C. medical examiner's office.

In addition, they cited the contributions of numerous people from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Marcy Rinker, of the Victim Witness Assistance Unit; paralegal specialist Lynette Briggs; Joshua Ellen, of the Litigation Technology Unit, and Assistant U.S. Attorney Deborah Sines, who worked on earlier stages of the investigation. Finally, they praised the work of Assistant U.S. Attorneys Michael Truscott and Reagan Taylor, who prosecuted the case.

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